

Secretary Chrisman Discusses Water Sustainability at San Diego Town Hall

The following are excerpts from Secretary Chrisman's remarks at the May 17 San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, AARP, and California State PTA Town Hall.

"It's great to be working for a governor who firmly believes in environmental protection; natural resource protection. An integral part of that—of course you in San Diego know only too well the vagaries of climate, what the vagaries of climate bring to California, and the difference in seasons, and rainfall, and snowfall. And you'll have an abundance of water one year, the next year you'll have scarcity.

And again, as we plan for water here in California, it's about planning for the long term. The Governor recognizes that what we really need to be doing is developing some long-term water policy strategies for California, building upon the successes that we've had here in California, building upon the fact that, you know, we have 37 million people and growing in this state that will all depend on water, all depend on our natural resource base. The economy will depend on all of that.

So we need to balance all of those needs, and we need to balance those needs with some long-term water strategies. The Governor's program put forth a Strategic Growth Plan 2 that we're looking at as a part of a long -term strategy for California:

The need to build more ground water and surface water storage here in California is very, very important.

The need to build upon our water efficiency program; we've done a great job here in California with our water efficiency programs, but we really need to be doing a better job with water efficiency, I think we all understand that.

The need for the continuation of our restoration efforts along the magnificent rivers here in California.

The Strategic Growth Plan has a bond measure that we are proposing, the Governor is proposing, has in it a critical part of that; not only the building of the storage facilities, but a recognition that the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta, as it's currently being configured and used, is not sustainable. That Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta is the largest estuary on the west coast. It's an estuary that's west and south of Sacramento, the confluence of a number of rivers that come out of northern and central California. It is also the area where the state and federal pumps are that ship water south. Quite a bit of the State Water Project gets into San Diego County.

And essentially, what we've got to do, [is] build a long-term strategy for the sustainability of that Delta. The Governor signed an Executive Order last year, and we're hard at work over the next year to 18 months to develop some long-term strategies that increase supplies, protect that valuable ecosystem, and that really build for the future in California. It's about planning for the long-term growth strategies in California, and key among all of that, of course, is making sure that we have adequate water supplies, and this governor is providing the kind of leadership necessary as we look further into the 21st century."